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Westly-Sponsored Bill to Prohibit Viagra for Sex Offenders Clears Key Senate Panel

SACRAMENTO – The Senate Public Safety Committee today unanimously passed **AB 240** (Bermudez), sponsored by State Controller Steve Westly. The bill would prohibit registered sex offenders from receiving impotence drugs or therapy at the State's expense.

"Convicted sex offenders shouldn't be getting Viagra on the state's dime – and we're putting an end to it with this bill," Westly said. "I want to thank Assemblymember Bermudez for leading the fight to protect California families."

Earlier this month, Westly released a preliminary review that showed that during a three-month period this year, Medi-Cal made payments to 4,300 beneficiaries for Viagra – at least 50 of which were registered sex offenders. Based on these findings, Westly called on the Legislature to stop this practice.

AB 240 would prohibit the state Department of Health Services from providing or paying for any prescription drug or therapy to treat erectile dysfunction for any Medi-Cal recipient required to register as a sex offender. The bill would also allow certain governmental agencies that authorize or provide publicly funded prescription drugs to disclose certain sex offender information.

In addition, **AB 240** would prohibit paroled sex offenders from living within one-quarter mile of any high school.

The Attorney General's Office found that Medi-Cal spent \$2.6 million to provide 5,855 men with Viagra and other similar drugs in the past year, and that 137 were registered sex offenders.

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